

**Information submitted by the Government of the
Republic of Azerbaijan with regard to the implementation
of the General Assembly Resolution A/RES72/234
on “ Women in development”**

✓ Integrating a gender perspective in national sustainable development policies and strategies

In order to coordinate the implementation of tasks entrusted to each government agency under the commitments undertaken within "2030 Agenda", the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued the Decree on October 6, 2016, to establish the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Ali Ahmadov was appointed as the chairman of the Council.

The government facilitates and supports SDG-focused initiatives of civil society institutions, academia, business and professional associations, other stakeholders and partners. Driven by the principle of “leaving no one behind”, which is a core commitment of the SDGs, and determined to engage all stakeholders in achieving the SDGs, the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan partnered with the UN Office in Azerbaijan conducted panel discussions on SDG implementation which brought together representatives of the different groups of society (academia, civil society, women, youth, parliament).

In this regard, on May 2017, panel discussions on the theme “The Role of the Civil Society in achieving the SDGs in Azerbaijan” were conducted in partnership with the civil society. On 9 June 2017, a panel discussions on the theme “Sustainable Development Goals: Women and Progress” was conducted with the support of the Council and UN Office in Azerbaijan. These discussions stated that the government, acting as coordinator for the nationalization of SDGs, was committed to assisting and supporting SDGs-oriented initiatives of civil society institutions, academic circles, business and professional associations and other stakeholders.

In 2017, a 45-minute special lessons devoted to the theme on "SDGs: Education can change the world" was conducted in the Educational Complexes in the country. At the event, children aged 11 to 14 were informed in detail about issues such as the role of education in changing the world, the VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW - AZERBAIJAN 33 results of good education, access to education and education level in the world and Azerbaijan, the global development goals and the role of education in achieving these goals.

17 goals, 87 targets and 118 indicators have been defined as final priority for Azerbaijan from the list of 17 goals, 169 targets and 242 indicators during 2018.

Furthermore, on 10-19 July 2017, Azerbaijan submitted its first report at the High-Level Political Forum, which captured a set of six identified SDGs (namely SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14) and SDG 17 on Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

To support engagement of the civil society in the SDGs implementation, EU and UNDP, National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development, State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs, developed and launched the project "Promoting the role of civil society organizations in gender-sensitive SDGs implementation".

The project's target groups are Azerbaijani CSOs (Civil Society Organizations). The main objective of the project is to promote greater participation of CSOs in the gender-sensitive implementation of the national SDG agenda:

- i) to promote confidence building and dialogue between the civil society and the government around the SDGs related issues;
- ii) to improve understanding and knowledge of CSOs, to apply gender-responsive approach to SDG implementation;
- iii) to increase participation of CSOs in the implementation of gender-sensitive SDG initiatives.

“Young Ambassadors on SDGs” was initiated within the framework of the project “Creating new bases for supporting young people’s active participation in global political debate”. The purpose of the 17 young Ambassadors is to promote SDGS in Azerbaijan and to encourage the participation of young people in achieving Sustainable Development goals. 9 out of the 17 Young Ambassadors are women who are engaged for the Goal 1, Goal 3, Goal 4, Goal 5, Goal 6, Goal 7, Goal 10, Goal 13, Goal 15.

- ✓ **Promoting active labour market policies on full and productive employment and decent work for women, eliminating gender-based discrimination in labour markets and enacting and enforcing minimum wages**

The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On employment", which serves to improving the employment and employment services, was adopted by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018. This law envisages improvement of state policy and services, social protection of unemployed and employed citizens, formation of effective working mechanisms through introduction of innovative approaches in this area, expansion of active labor market programs. The law also includes the "Individual Employment Program" article , which considers special employment program for helping a person to return to the labor market.

The Employment Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2030 has been approved by the Presidential Decree of October 30, 2018 with the goals to reduce the unemployment rate to 4 per cent by 2030, including the unemployment rate among women and young people.

Some amendments have been made to the Labor Code to improve the working conditions of workers with family obligations, following the ratification of ILO Conventions No 156 on Equal Opportunities and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women: Employees with Family Responsibilities. Thus, it is envisaged to introduce a shortened working time under Article 91 of the Labor Code, with no more than 36 hours for parents, who raise their children up to the age of 3 years.

Measures to increase the employment of women are considered in the State Program on Socio-Economic Development of the Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2014-2018.

According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Additional Measures to Ensure the Self-Employment of the Population" dated April 7, 2016, a special self-employment program is being implemented. Within the framework of this program, low-income families are provided with the governmental support and provision of direct, indirect material, and other property (not cash) to the family for the purpose of establishing or developing the individual households. The family is provided with equipment and services in accordance with the business plan provided.

Survey on "Obstacles to women's participation in economics in Azerbaijan" in different regions was held in September-October 2017 within the framework of a joint project implemented by the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Population Fund and The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs to determine the overall analysis of the women and girl's benefits from the economic and employment opportunities in the private sector, including positive and negative factors. The survey was conducted in order to facilitate the employment among women in the private sector and to study problems faced by women job seekers, solutions, existing perspectives, equality of labor rights for women and men.

Gender-assessment – study on Women in private sector was conducted to analyze the role of the private sector in advancing gender equality and women's economic potential and economic challenges and opportunities faced by women in private sector and to support the efforts of the government, private sector and civil society organizations to promote women's economic empowerment. Other objectives of the study were to identify and analyze gender-specific barriers that hinder women in pursuing business opportunities and securing decent jobs.

On July 2018, Regional Women's Conference entitled "Leadership and Promotion of Economic Activity of Women in the Region for Sustainable Development" was held in Salyan Region. The conference focused on sales, promotion and change of marketable products, sustainable education, promotion of women's social activity, gender-based violence against women, social activism, networking of active women in the rural areas.

Conference on "New Opportunities on the Horizon: Green Light for Women Entrepreneurs" was organized jointly by the Women Entrepreneurship Development Association in September 2018.

1227 trainings, workshops, round tables and other events were held on such topics as "Business Plans and Investment Projects Development", "Create Business Idea", "Start Your Own Business", "Marketing", "Management", "Business Management", "Business Management", Creating and developing brand "Made in Azerbaijan", "Development of environmentally friendly agriculture", "Insurance of entrepreneurial activity in agriculture" by Baku Business Training Center under the Ministry of Economy in 2015-2018. 9160 participants were women entrepreneurs and women who started their business activities. Within the framework of the project "Training of female specialists in the regions of Azerbaijan and development of female entrepreneurs" jointly with the Azerbaijan Micro-Finance Association, trainings on "Financial literacy" and "Start and develop business" were conducted in cities and regions of the republic.

✓ Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, discrimination, sexual harassment against women at work , and providing remedies, support and services for victims survivors of violence and harassment

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Amendments to the Criminal Code of 31 May 2017, the sanctions were aggravated on the violation of the right of a pregnant woman or a woman who has children under the age of three, and man who grows up to three years of age alone. Thus, the sanction of Article 154.1 of the Criminal Code has been increased from "one hundred to five hundred

AZN" to "thousand to two thousand AZN, sanction of Article 164 from "five hundred to one thousand AZN" to "two thousand to three thousand AZN".

Article 205 of the new Code of Administrative Offenses adopted in 2015, sanctions for pressure on a worker exposed to sexual harassment sanction were aggravated. Thus, Article 205 of the new Code of Administrative Offenses enforced the sanction of an official who committed an offense, from seventy to ninety-nine AZN, from five thousand to two thousand five hundred AZN.

Within the framework of the project on Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence among Internally Displaced Persons implemented jointly by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, Operative Working Groups were set up within Monitoring Groups for gender-based violence and violence against children under the Executive Powers in 2018. Within the "Combating Gender-based violence in Azerbaijan" project, four-day capacity building trainings were held for the staff of eleven regional Family and Children Support Centers of the State Committee for Family, Woman and Children Affairs and NGOs accredited to provide support and shelter services to victims of domestic violence. The main aim of the training was to advance knowledge and skills of staff of support centers in providing services for victims of GBV/DV given the findings of the capacity assessment of Family Support Centers and NGOs conducted by the UNFPA Country Office. Trainings introduced to professionals approximately 20 sessions on the subjects as hidden manifestations of gender-based violence, recognition of the psychological condition of the victim, templates of forms to be filled in to build referral and response mechanisms and etc. Risk assessment and safety planning were new subjects which participants got familiarized with. In addition, participants obtained information on short-term and long-term protection orders, identifying victim/survivor's needs and developing an adequate individual plan, coordination and collaboration with other agencies, building and increasing victim's trust and keeping confidentiality, working with children of the victims,

how to interview and listen to the children accompanying victims, as well as on how and where to refer women who are experiencing violence.

A large-scale survey on the extent of domestic violence and the strategies combating violence against women was jointly co-organized by the UNFPA, the Statistical Committee and The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs in 2017. The survey was conducted between 3229 women from 3695 households. The survey has been analyzed. The survey, as a first-ever review after the adoption of the domestic violence law in 2010, determines to which extent the violence has spread over the past period.

Starting from 2014, Support for Law and Justice Reforms project are being implemented by the State Statistical Committee and The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the German Society for Cooperation (GIZ). Special seminars were organized in 9 regions in 2017. During the two-day workshops, 270 women and men were educated on domestic violence and women's rights and women's rights in family relationships and the book "Legislation Collection on Prevention of Domestic Violence" was distributed as an educational material to the seminar participants.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs initiated a two-year project entitled "Combating gender-based violence in Azerbaijan" in close partnership with UNFPA and US Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2016-2017. The main objective of the project was to support the Government of Azerbaijan with creation of effective guidance and response mechanisms to combat gender-based violence. The project was implemented through the series of interrelated components on improvement of legal and policy framework, large scale awareness-raising campaigns, provision of trainings for relevant service providers, as well as development of integrated strategies to coordinate multi-sectorial approaches to addressing violence against women that are expected to contribute to the series of major outcomes, outputs and results. The Government of Azerbaijan is currently engaged in the development of the National Action Plan on

GBV prevention and response as well as the guidelines for establishment of the inter-agency coordination mechanism in this regard. Both policy documents have major provisions on improving the delivery of support, protection and rehabilitation services through support and referral centers for victims of violence. The document also envisions further revision of the accreditation rules and procedures for the centers in the capacity to provide the adequate support services to the victims of GBV. The draft of the National Action Plan on domestic violence has passed through relevant state agencies for review and is presented to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval.

As an example of high-level advocacy events it is worth to mention annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence Campaigns that provided platform to review the progress regarding implementation of the national legal and policy framework on domestic violence and the related international commitments.

The UN Population Fund with the assistance of SCFWCA launched a research entitled "Financial Losses Caused by Gender Based Violence" at the end of 2018. The result of the investigation will reflect, the value of lost economic productivity as a result of the victim's violence, the amount of medical, social and legal support provided to the victim, as well as the factors and figures that would prevent the victim from gaining further benefits. It will accelerate the implementation of strategies and policies on prevention of GBV in the country.

Taking into the account the importance of women's legal awareness two-days training seminars were held among women living in the regions in September-November 2017. The "Women's Rights Guide", a joint publication by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the GIZ, publication of "Legislation on Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan", as well as the State Committee's Family, Women's Journal was distributed to the participants.

- ✓ **Promoting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth strategies that benefit women by shifting employment from low-paid, low-skill and low-productivity sectors to more value-added activities and ensuring that industrial upgrading linked to export expansion includes women**

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs jointly with international organizations cooperates on the projects to help women in rural areas to create their own businesses. During 2017-2018 more than 500 rural women have been provided with capacity development support. As a result, women improved their professional skills in the field of accounting, CV and resume writing, presentation skills, financial literacy, computer science, fundraising, proposal writing and organizational development. Only in one region of the south of Azerbaijan, more than 800 school girls got access to improved water sanitation as the result of installation of new sewerage systems in 6 communities.

Association of Rural Women of Azerbaijan was established by the Ministry of Agriculture together with the World Bank to support the social and economic development of rural women in 2019. The main task of the Agency is, first of all, to support agriculture, support women's initiatives to increase employment in rural areas and improve the well-being of the population.

New created Women Resource Centers in 8 regions of the country offer women and girls free access to library resources, internet, computers, and many more. An impressive network of more than 3000 rural women was created through these centers. Over years, more than 100 women, all in all, were able to build on their entrepreneurial potential and start new businesses, through in-kind grant support, business development training and mentorship from UNDP and partners. Today, they are successfully pursuing their own businesses, additionally employing the total of 50 other women in these new establishments.

The technical assistance projects on “The promotion of women’s participation in economic and social life in rural and regional areas” are being continued in the country since 2011 to create the mechanism for disseminating knowledge, teaching

skills and facilitating information exchange in the area of rural women's economic empowerment. The Project envisioned this mechanism as a regional Women's Resource Centers focusing on economic and social empowerment of rural women and strengthens our efforts in addressing the needs and concerns of rural women in the area of economic and social participation. 8 Women Resource Center were opened as a result of the project. Totally, 5500 women benefited from the project, 102 women started the entrepreneurship activity, 50 women were provided with jobs since 2011. During 2018, 904 women participated in trainings, 28 women joined business activity, 17 women found new jobs.

By strengthening training and extension services for rural women in Azerbaijan, FAO has launched a new project with the aim of improving women's socio-economic empowerment and their inclusion in the paid employment sector. The project titled "Capacity Development Support to Rural Women on the Socio-economic and Gender Aspects of Sustainable Rural Development". Within the scope of the project, FAO supported the development of a need analysis and training strategy in three pilot provinces in Azerbaijan. The provinces have been selected based on the regional differences, agricultural production patterns and capacity of women's organizations in those towns. FAO shared its experiences with national extension service staff in undertaking gender-sensitive needs assessment, giving support for designing and providing training that targets the specific needs and priorities of rural women, especially on promoting empowerment of rural women, food security and livelihoods. The project was closely related to SDGs which advocates the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. According to agricultural census data for 2015, the share of women in the total number of people engaged in agricultural work was 48.6%. According to agricultural census data of 2015, the share of female farm managers among the total number of farm managers that owned and/or used lands as individual entrepreneur, family-peasant and household farms was 9.4%.